

# EXHIBIT 112

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"So You Want A Job, Eh?"

# 'So You Want A Job, Eh?'

## THE GENE COLAN INTERVIEW

A rambling conversation about Timely (and others), mostly from the 1940s to the early-'70s, with "The Dean"  
Interview conducted & edited by Roy Thomas • Transcribed by Jon B. Knutson

**[EDITOR'S NOTE:** Gene Colan, as artist of "Sub-Mariner," "Iron Man," Daredevil, and other major features beginning in the mid-1960s, is one of the most-loved and best-remembered artists of Marvel's Silver Age. Earlier this year saw the publication of *The Gene Colan Annual: Painting with Pencil*, a trade paperback of more than 100 pages of text and art by Gene. Having admired Gene's work on "Sub-Mariner" in the months before I came to work for Marvel in mid-'65, I wanted to talk with him about this period—and of course about his even earlier work—and Gene was most obliging.—R.T.]

**ROY THOMAS:** Gene, I wanted to start off by mentioning the subtitle of your annual: "Painting With Pencil." Because that's the way I and some other people always thought of your work. How did that title occur to you?

**GENE COLAN:** It was my wife Adrienne's idea. Years ago they didn't have a good method of reproducing for pencil. Today, of course, with the technology they have, it can be done.

**RT:** I've tried to explain to people sometimes about the difficulty of even a very good inker catching everything about your work on paper, because you would pencil so many different shades of black and gray on the page...

**COLAN:** Yeah, I did that, really, just to get into it and feel what I needed to feel to put it across. I figured if the inker could capture it, fine, and if he couldn't, well, that will have to be fine, too.

**RT:** One of the things I most remember about working on your pages—since I worked with the original art in those days—is that I always ended up having to wash my hands several times an hour to get the graphite off! [laughs] I'm sure you did, too, and I'm sure Tom Palmer and others did.

**COLAN:** [laughs] Oh, yeah. I think all artists should have their work reproduced from pencils, really I do, because once the inker gets in, you've got two styles. It's never interpreted the same way the artist had meant. But I'm slow... and so, because of that, I get a little too nervous inking it. I'm more at home with pencils.

**RT:** You did do some inking in the early days. But during the heyday of Marvel, when you were doing "Sub-Mariner," "Iron Man," etc., kind of thing, I don't recall you often telling Stan, "Gee, I'd really like to ink my own work."

**COLAN:** No, I didn't.

**RT:** And yet, back in the '40s and '50s, you inked a lot of your stories.

**COLAN:** I inked *some* of them. I inked a lot of westerns, a lot of war stories. I inked the ones that have my name on them.

**RT:** There was a lot of *black* in those stories.

**COLAN:** Oh, yeah.

**RT:** I noticed in your annual you do a lot of writing, and you have a nice turn of phrase. Why didn't you ever talk to Stan about doing any writing years ago?

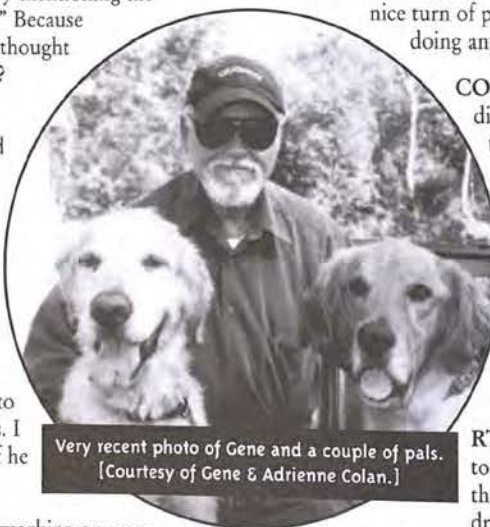
**COLAN:** It never occurred to me. It really never did. I was so steeped in the art of it, I never thought about writing. But I enjoy writing. As you get older, you begin to review things in your mind, and think you might give this a shot, and so I've enjoyed writing some of these articles in the book. They're things that pop up in my mind, and I have no answers for them—[laughs]—except that I know certain things. Like when someone says, "Maybe," that means "No." "Maybe" is just another way of putting you off.

**RT:** Quite often! [laughs] Now, to finally go back to the beginning—you were born in New York in the Bronx, right? How did you get interested in drawing? Was it at an early stage?

**COLAN:** Oh, I started at three. The first thing I ever drew was a lion. I must've absolutely copied it or something. But that's what my folks tell me. And from then on, I just drew everything in sight. My grandfather was my favorite subject. He was very easy to do, and I loved him very much, so that helped a lot. But I tried my grandmother, it was too difficult. My mother, who looked so much like her, was also difficult... and my dad, I did my father once or twice, and he came across fairly well.

**RT:** So, at a very early stage, you were drawing from life. A lot of comic book artists nowadays never get to that stage.

**COLAN:** Oh, they've got to get around to it. *Speed* is important when you're drawing from life—because whoever you're drawing, often they don't *know* you're drawing them. If it's somebody, say, in the park, you never know how long they're going to sit there, so the idea is to get it in



Very recent photo of Gene and a couple of pals.  
[Courtesy of Gene & Adrienne Colan.]

RT: But the DC editors didn't think to give you super-hero work?

COLAN: No, no.

RT: They had a very departmentalized company. When I think of guys like you and Romita being there in the romance department—Stan and I used to just laugh about that, the fact that they wasted so many artists at that time.

COLAN: By the time I got through inking the work, everything looked the same. They had a style up there, in the house. It was important—no matter who the artist was—everyone's work had to look the same.

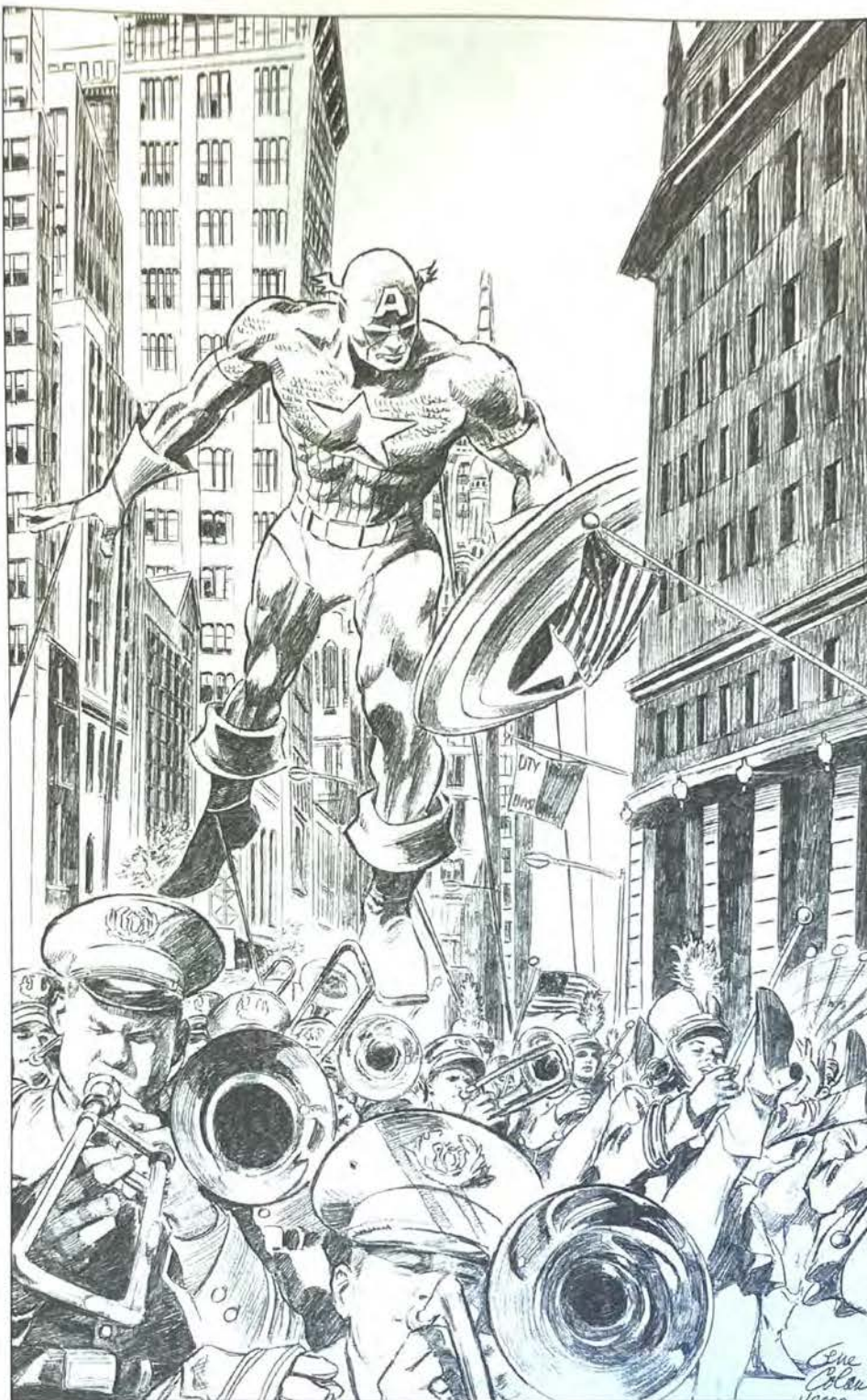
RT: Gil Kane used to call it the "Dan Barry look." I guess it eventually kind of took over. Everything had to follow his lead. At the same time, you did a little work at Warren with Archie Goodwin, didn't you? On war and horror stuff?

COLAN: Yeah, thanks for reminding me. Archie was the editor there. I did a lot of wash drawings.

RT: So here you are, working mostly in the DC romance department, doing a little war stuff or whatever. How did it happen that you wound up suddenly going over to Marvel and becoming "Adam Austin" doing "Sub-Mariner"?

COLAN: Stan asked me to come over and work with him. I don't remember how, but I do know that we made a connection, and he asked me, "How about coming over?" And so, my answer was—I think this was at his house. I had some work to deliver late one night—it was in the winter time, and I went over and delivered it—and he asked me to come over to Marvel, and I said, "Well, what's the inducement? Why should I leave DC and come over to work with you, unless there's a little something in it for me to do that? I'm not just going to leave them [DC]." He said, "Well, if you're looking for more money, there's no point to it." I said, "What do you mean?" [laughs] He said, "Simply because, sooner or later, they're going to have to fire you, and you'll have to come over here." [laughs] I smiled, and I said, "Stan, I think I have to go." And I shook his hand, and I said, "That's okay, I'll just stay where I am." The next day, I got a phone call from Stan, because I had asked for more money, and he gave it to me. He tried to bluff me, and... then I came over.

RT: And you used the name "Adam Austin" to protect the DC account. Where did that name come from?



Here's the other, even more humongous spankin'-new drawing Gene and Adrienne brought to Roy in San Diego! Enjoy! [Art ©2000 Gene Colan; Captain America ©2000 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

COLAN: I don't know. Stan might've helped me with that. That's how it all began. Actually, the fun of working on comics with Stan was that, although he put in all the dialogue, he allowed the artists to take a very small plot he'd give them and build it into a 20-page story. There was nothing to the plot—it was maybe just a few sentences—but the beginning was there, and you could do anything you wanted.

RT: When you started on "Sub-Mariner," that was 12 pages, but it was



Marvel readers' first peak at the artwork of "Adam Austin" (nee Gene Colan), in *Tales to Astonish* #70 (Aug. 1965). Gene soon rounded off Namor's head! [©2000 Marvel Characters, Inc.]

like an ongoing serial every month. So if you didn't get to a certain point, well, you just broke the story somewhere else! [laughs]

COLAN: Yeah, well, you know, sometimes I got jammed up in the end, because there was still more to do.

RT: Did Stan write out plots then, or was it mostly just over the phone?

COLAN: I recorded our phone conversations, and then I would go by the recording. Other times, he'd send me a letter of a few paragraphs.

RT: You've said you weren't as wild about "Sub-Mariner" as some other characters you did...

COLAN: I didn't like "Sub-Mariner." It was a boring, tiring thing. It was Atlantis, the underwater city, and it meant an awful lot of work. I just didn't like it. I couldn't make him look good, not by my standards. He had a square-looking head.

RT: I was a high school teacher when you started doing that, and I remember really being knocked out by opening the page of an issue of *Tales to Astonish* [#70, cover date Aug. 1965] and seeing your first splash, which had the Sub-Mariner swimming very dramatically toward the reader, and it had this nice, realistic—realistic for comics—and kind of illustrative look to it. It was a step in a slightly different direction. Stan obviously felt it was time to branch out and not just have every-thing look like Jack and Steve.

COLAN: That's right. A style began to emerge somewhere along the line.

RT: What did you think of Vince Colletta's inking?

COLAN: I never liked it. He was too fast, and he didn't put any time into it. He was simply out for the buck, and as much money as he could make, and he whipped out that stuff. I liked Vince Alascia, do you remember him?

RT: He was a *Captain America* inker back in the '40s.

COLAN: He worked a lot with me. In fact, he inked everything Syd Shores did. Wonderful inker. I wished I would've teamed up with him. I was looking to team up with someone, but I didn't. Once it left my hands, I never could get a good inker. I can't remember his name, the fellow who inked for DC that eventually worked with Stan. He passed away... Italian guy.

RT: Frank Giacoia?

COLAN: Yeah, I loved him. He always made me look good.

RT: Jack Abel inked you on "Iron Man," and Bill Everett inked a couple of your "Sub-Mariners"; that was an interesting combination. Syd Shores inked you for quite a while on *Daredevil*.

COLAN: Oh, yes, yes. Syd was an excellent artist.

RT: By the '60s he hadn't metamorphosed into the kind of action artist Stan really wanted, but he could certainly draw. In fact, he'd been the main *Captain America* artist for years in the '40s. But in the '60s he still kept busy as an inker, and he did some penciling on some horror stories. Gene, you obviously made an impression on Stan, because I could tell, when I started reading your "Sub-Mariner," that immediately, because of the way you were drawing it, Stan's speeches for the Sub-Mariner got more and more Shakespearean and noble. I think you were pressing him; you were drawing all these noble-looking, realistic pictures...

COLAN: It worked only because that's what Stan wanted me to do. He would act out everything. If he had to stand on top of his desk, he'd do it, and said, "This is the pose I'm looking for." He would act out every-thing.



We didn't run across any original art from Gene's "Sub-Mariner" in *Tales to Astonish* while preparing this interview, so here's a page of Namor vs. Mar-Vell, from *Captain Marvel* #4 (Aug. 1968), repro'd from photocopies courtesy of Kevin Stawieray. Inks by Vince Colletta, story by Roy Thomas. Kevin's comic art collection focuses on '60s and '70s DC and Marvel artists. [©2000 Marvel Characters, Inc.]